

A tribute to
whiskers



On Friday 19th Jan we said a sad but very fond farewell to one of the biggest characters in our photographic world. Graham Hodgkiss ARPS MPAGB AFIAP passed away on Dec 24th 2017. Graham was larger than life and you got what you saw, a man who enjoyed life, enjoyed his family, and was generous with his time and knowledge. He travelled all over the country, to judge and lecture at many camera clubs and exhibitions and only retired last June, after 34 years on the judges and lecturers lists, when even he had to admit, it was becoming too much. John Cartlidge recalled a time when Graham thought he was going to be late getting to Cannock PS because of hold ups on the motorway. What did he do? He drove on the hard shoulder!



Get Lost

If you cut Graham in half, like a stick of rock, it would read Aston and Erdington PS and Photography. Graham known as "Mr A&E" first joined Erdington District PS in 1966, and was soon involved with club activities, entering competitions, supporting social events and being elected onto the committee as Librarian in 1967 and as President in 1971. He was instrumental in the merger of Aston with Erdington and in 1972 was one of the founder members. He served on A&E's committee from 1972 until 2006, and was President 1982-84, 1993-95 and 2000-02. In 1991, he was made an honorary life member, for services to the club. One of the things that A&E PS were known for was their trips, in particular to Cwmorthin, which became known as A&E Valley. As John Kellett recalls "Mr A&E was issuing visas for photographers wishing to visit 'their land'." In 2013 he rallied his A&E troops together and took on the Presidency again to steer the club through some tricky times, and would be happy to see them once again on the up.

Graham joined Solihull PS in 1980 and was soon involved with the committee from 1981-87. He was part of the team behind Solihull Open Exhibition of British Photography. It was whilst at Solihull that he joined forces with seven other photographers, including Bob Moore, Jerry Wooldridge, Alan Millward and Ray Spence, calling themselves the Midland Dimension, "a highly respected group of original thinking photographers" whose work was exhibited around the country including at the RPS. It was at this time that Graham achieved his ARPS.

In 1982, Graham was elected onto the MCPF Council and was part of the Midland Salon sub-committee and Chairman of the Salon in 1986. Other roles were; MidPhot liaison officer, member of the Judges Committee, and Photofolio Chairman, stepping down from Council in 1989. In 2007 Graham was re-elected to Council to organise the MCPF's entry into the PAGB

Inter-Fed competitions. He took great pride in this, working alongside Jane. He not only looked at the work accepted into MidPhot and the Championships but also at work that had just missed the cut off, and when he was out and about he kept an eye out for work worthy of consideration. Lesley Betts of Stourport PS, recalls one year receiving a letter from Graham informing her that she had an image used in the final submission. She got back to him saying that particular

"Graham Hodgkiss was a one-off!a leading light in Midland photography, he'll will be sorely missed." Bob Moore

photograph had not been accepted in MidPhot. Graham's reply, "I look at all the work submitted regardless of whether or not it was accepted, and if I think it worthy of entry then I will use it." It was always his aim to have as many clubs and authors as possible represented as part of the entry.

In 2007 he was awarded his APAGB for services to photography and enrolled on the MCPF Roll of Honour, and in 2009 he achieved his MPAGB in prints and AFIAP. Having moved to the Cotswolds in 2004, with Jane, he joined Cheltenham CC and, you've guessed it, was soon involved with the club, being invited to join the International Exhibition committee and judging it in 2013.

Graham was also involved in the production of two books; in 1987 he was Midland regional organiser of the "One Day for Life" project, which raised money for Cancer Research and "Portraits of Aston & Erdington 2000" which was a visual record of life in the Birmingham suburbs, photographed by members of A&E and sold in aid of the Stroke Association. Graham was never one for faint praise and his support was 100%. He donated two trophies to the MCPF, one for the best overall monochrome worker in the Midland Salon, which has now been adopted by MidPhot for the best monochrome



Nan

portraiture print, and one for the best projected landscape, which has a hand-painted tile incorporated into it of 'A&E Valley'.

Whoever you talk to about Graham, a common theme always comes to the fore. He was loud, you heard him before you saw him.

It was my honour to present Graham with his leaving present from Council and little did we realise that would be last time many of us would see him. I will make no excuses for using some of the words that I used on that occasion again.

Undoubtedly Graham's best skills were photography and talking and not necessarily in that order. Graham was passionate about photography and he loved nothing better than sitting down and discussing it with whoever would listen to him. He was a raconteur and would often have us in fits of laughter with his stories of the things that have happened to him. No one can doubt his love of photography. He was honest and forthright in his opinions and was respected throughout the photographic community. His lectures were always entertaining and informative, second to none for content and quality. His judging was fair and constructive. He has given us his time and energy. It was his enthusiasm that came across, if you were willing to learn then Graham would teach you. Graham was a proud man, proud of his work and achievements, proud of his photography, but most of all Graham was proud of Jane and his family. In his own words "Looking back over the last 57 years, it would not have been possible without the support of my family and fellow photographers. I would like to thank Aston and Erdington PS, Solihull PS and Cheltenham CC for being the vehicle to make it possible".

"He was a great character, full of fun and life, his print talks will live in my memory."
John Cartlidge

He will be missed for his support in all the things that he was involved in, and he will be missed for his bear hugs.

Lu Duckett
Hon. President Midland Counties Photographic Federation



Not Now Arthur

My own recollections of Graham

I met him years ago when at an exhibition , we hit it off immediately, sharing the same sense of anti-establishment humour and the same love of darkroom photography at the time. As the years ticked by we met up and passed the time of day at many photographic events, some which we were both selectors at, some that we were both talking at. Graham's ability was one of communication, he had his own style both in the work he produced, which was full-on, harsh and powerful, and in the rich baritone Birmingham accent he employed to great effect. That voice and accent carried him a long way, endearing him to every audience, because it showed so much character. He was in many ways 'louder' than life, so much so that if he lecturing in Solihull you could actually hear him in Hall Green! He gave many hours to the Midlands Photographic Federation , was an avid exhibitor and he steered Aston & Erdington CC through some great times and some of its more difficult periods, as a father figure. Graham was one of the members of a group called Midland Dimension, a highly respected group of original-thinking photographers



After The Storm

that included Bob Moore, Jerry Wooldridge, Alan Millward and Ray Spence, he deserved to be in that company.

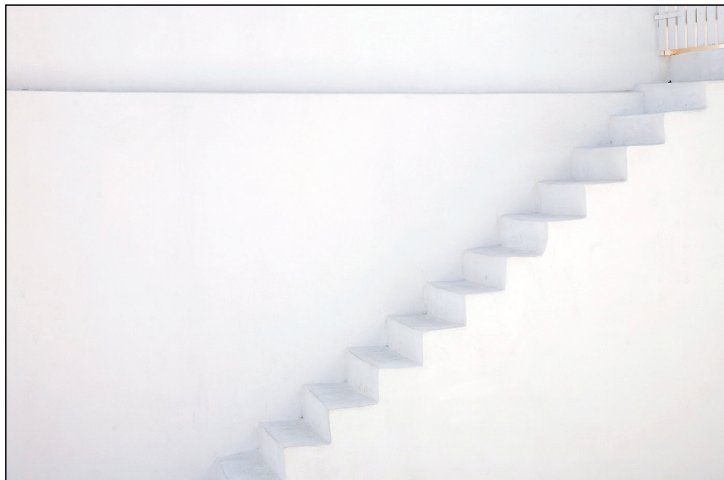
"He was in many ways 'louder' than life, so much so that if he lecturing in Solihull you could actually hear him in Hall Green!" Leigh Preston

He laughed his head off when he saw me in a suit ! He used to love a good joke and we both rallied at the chance to tear into 'phoney' images and he was full of great stories. Graham was not your average club member, he was more than that, he stood out - was affectionately known as 'whiskers' because of that well-groomed facial hair. Beyond that he was always approachable, always held an opinion and would always engage with you after you'd given a talk. Photography has thrown up some real characters in the years I've been involved with it, none more so than Graham 'Whiskers' Hodgkiss. Certainly we'll all miss him, not just in the Midlands, but countrywide and his photography will be missed on the exhibition walls, and sadly we'll never hear those dulcet 'Brummy' tones again.

Leigh Preston

Graham Hodgkiss was a one-off!

He was the sort of guy who is the backbone of organised club photography. Without the dedication of members like Graham, club photography would disintegrate. I first met Graham many years ago when he was an active member of Aston & Erdington P.S. We became



The Gate

friends. Graham was always ready to get involved with the nitty gritty of club photography. Never short of an opinion he would try his hand at anything including the difficult job of Chairing the Midland Salon of Photography. Along with several other prominent Midland photographers he helped create 'Midland Dimension' in the 1980's, a group of like-minded Midland photographers who were ahead of their time.

He was awarded his MPAGB with a panel of traditional and creative prints and was, quite rightly, extremely proud of his achievement.

Graham was a leading light in Midland photography, he'll will be sorely missed.

I have no greater tribute than to say he was a mate.

I'll miss him, his deep booming voice and his enthusiasm.

Bob Moore

I first got to know Graham back in the early 80's when he helped me with my LRPS print panel when he lived in Solihull, glad to say he and Lou Bergonzi did a great job and I managed to get my first photographic set of letters. His time and expertise taught me a lot, thank you Graham. He was a great character, full of fun and life, his print talks will live in



Best Of Friends

my memory.

One time Graham was booked into Cannock to give us a talk when he got delayed by work commitments and traffic on the M6. Thinking he would be late at the club he drove on the hard shoulder to the exit, only problem he was spotted and got fined !!!! But there is no way Graham would have any money from CPS, what a star that man was and will be sadly missed by all at CPS plus all of the clubs in the MCPF.

Last time Graham judged for Cannock PS was in the annual Staffordshire 13 way print comp in 2016 even though he was not a well man and had to use a portable oxygen tank to allow him to talk. What a job he did for the 100 or so fellow photographers present on the night to see a master judge at work, giving a first class judgement that went down well even with the clubs who did not do well - the mark of a special judge.

John Cartlidge EFIAP/p APAGB BPE5

As friends we go back to the early eighties, both being members of A & E and serving on committee, and both being Presidents, and Dinah & I and Graham being made Life Members of the society.

As members we used to have many group visits to North Wales, Blackpool and Whitby. We always had great fun and a lot of leg pulling!

We will always remember his points of view and when I



No Takers

started out in photography I respected his wisdom .
I am sure it will be a big turn out for “ Whiskers “ as Bob Moore called him and we wish him a great send-off!

John & Dinah Hartshorne

John Kellett recalls some of Graham’s sense of humour,
“I recall Graham relating the story of his involvement with an exhibition in which one of Alan Millward’s prints had been accepted.
Alan searched the exhibition looking for his print.
Finally he asked Graham where it was.
Graham replied that clearly Alan hadn’t gone to the loo yet.
Well there were a lot of prints to display and space was a little short.



Work Space

When asked at a lecture did Graham use a tripod for his landscapes -
Graham replied ‘yes’ but not to put the camera on but as something to help him climb back up with his hip.

In the mid 1970s he was ‘Mr A&E’ and issued visas for photographers wishing to visit ‘their land’ at Cwmorthin.

Some years ago, Jill and I were away for a long weekend with Smethwick PS at the Worms Head Hotel on the Gower Peninsula. We were walking back to the hotel for dinner and were surprised to see Graham heading towards us at a rate of knots. “You’re going the wrong way! You’ll miss dinner!” I called as he powered past. “Yes,” was his rejoinder, “but look at that light!” He disappeared towards the Worms Head and the prints that he made have ended his print presentations for several years. Better than dinner, eh?

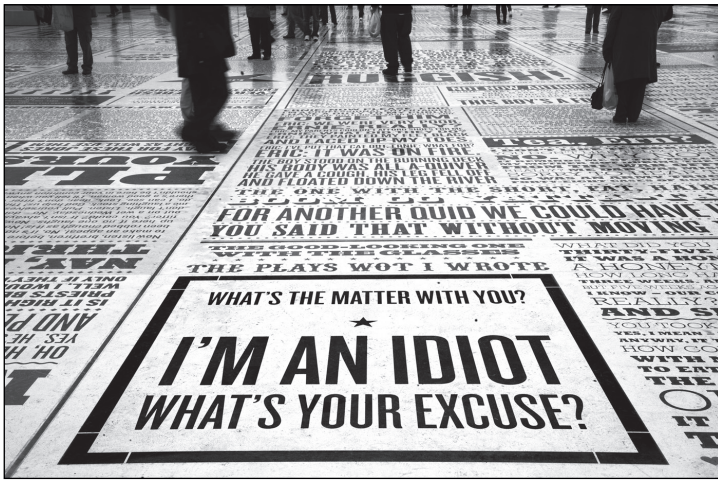
Peter Young



Fading Memorial



Old Sea Dog



What's Your Excuse

We used to have an inter club with Wrekin Arts and Graham used to wind them up by calling them Country Bumpkins. So one year they came dressed as farmers and bought a duck with them

The inter club with Dudley camera club Graham would talk them into buying a barrel of beer. Graham usually tried to drink the most!!

When we went out on one of our trips Wales he talked a member into buying bottle of whisky at the pub. But Graham had got there first and made sure that the landlord said he only had an extra large bottle. The person buying ended up paying £40 for the whisky But see the funny side and joined in with the joke.

Graham did not drive on our Wales weekends, and made sure we all put our cameras in the boot, however, he kept his handy and would jump out take his picture before we could get ours out.

During a wet week end in Wales Graham crossed a stream, the person following had not seen how Graham had crossed and asked if it was OK to jump across. "Yes" Graham answered. So he jumped and finished up to his waist in mud. I had never before heard this person swear, I have now.

When in group walking, one of the party shouted he was falling. Graham in his normal way just shouted "quick throw me your cameras!!" The cameras were saved.

Recollections from Bob Mason

The following is an extraction from an conversation between two founder members of A&E, Graham Pearson (GP) and Graham (EH). This first appeared in the MCPF's Spotlight



What is It?

magazine in April 1988.

GP - Pictures and picture styles change over the years ... what was your first really successful picture and can you describe it?

EH - I started off as most people do in camera clubs because I had no darkroom facilities, doing transparencies and I used



Graham when President of Aston and Erdington PS with Phil Swain then President of the MCPF *Spotlight March 1986*

to do quite well in exhibitions... I got so much pleasure out doing that first print that I was struck and it had got to be monochrome printing for me..."

EH - My first print that I got into an exhibition was "Slate Abode" and is quite an old picture, but if you were to ask me which print put Graham Hodgkiss on the road to being a more well known photographer, there is no doubt that it would be the silly picture that didn't even need a camera called "Black and White Elephants".....

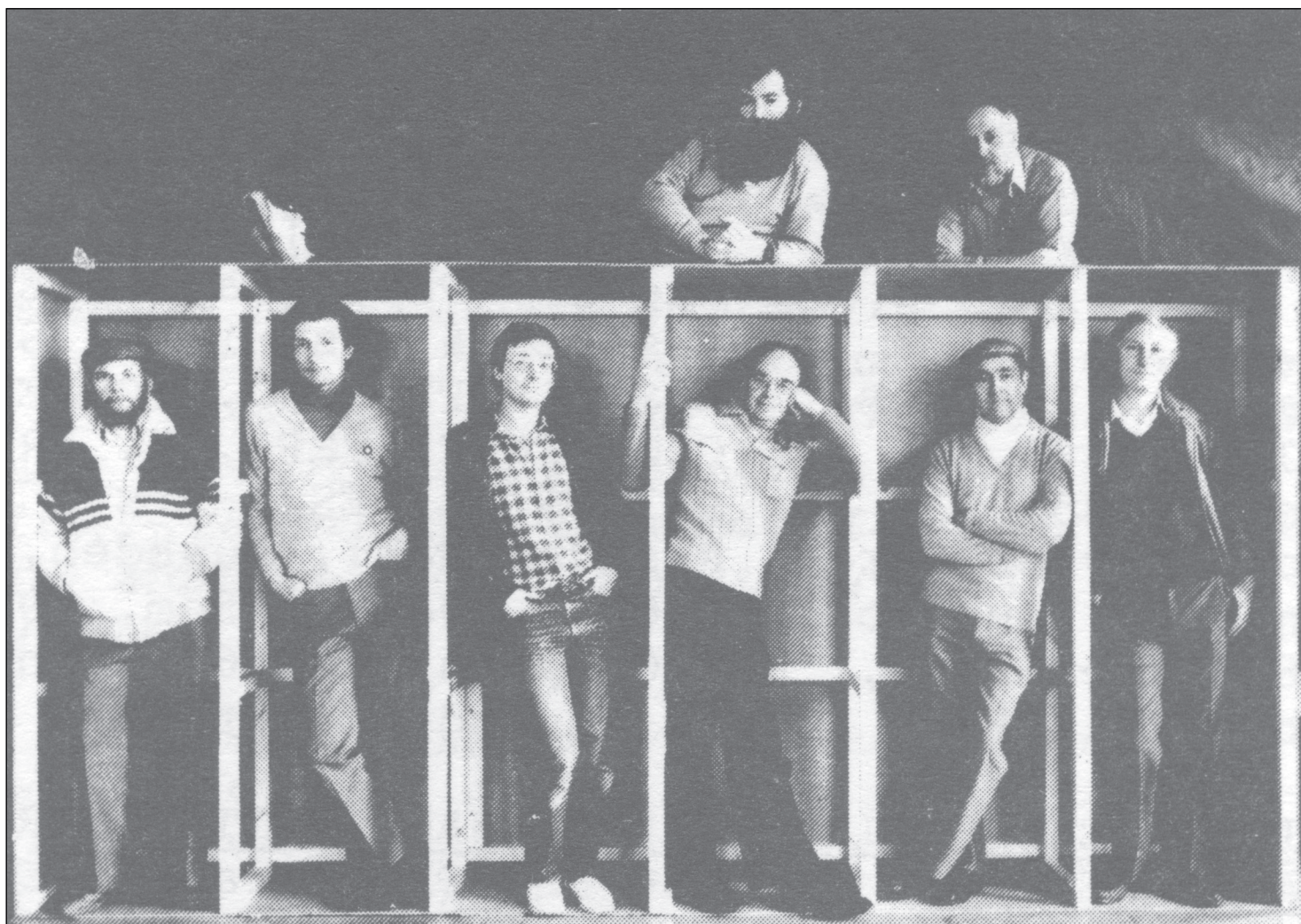
GP - You mentioned that you started by doing colour slides, I know you do colour prints but mostly monochrome, is this your favourite medium?

EH- Yes by far, I can create mood, atmosphere and aggression and sometimes when I am in the darkroom I feel all those things....If I want an angry sky I can produce all the things I need.

"We always had great fun and a lot of leg pulling!" John and Dinah Hartshorne

GP - Do you think modern automatic cameras prevent photographers thinking as much as they should do when taking pictures?

EH - ...if I want to create anything I dictate to the camera what I want it to do.... he should put onto his film exactly what he wants on it.



Spotlight July 1985

Midland Dimension



PHOTOGRAPHY BY:

Bob Moore FRPS
Dennis Worrall FRPS
Alan Millward FRPS
Ron Edwards FRPS
Jerry Wooldrige FRPS
Lew Bergonzi ARPS
Graham Hodgkiss ARPS
Ray Spence ARPS

AV of exhibition available
for hire.
For details contact
Bob Moore 021 706 4614 or
Ray Spence 021 745 8163



Sponsored by

The Midland Dimension is a touring exhibition of prints. The exhibition was conceived with the idea of presenting the work of photographers in a more professional way and to show the work to its best advantage. All the prints are mounted, glazed and framed in the same fashion to present a unity throughout the exhibition. The AV of the exhibition is being prepared and should be available for next season. The price will probably be in the order of £8.00.

Bob Moore

102 Richmond Road, Olton, Solihull, West Midlands

Ray Spence

44 Farnborough Drive, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands

Photography by:

Bob Moore FRPS
Dennis Worrall FRPS
Alan Millward FRPS
Ron Edwards FRPS
Jerry Wooldrige FRPS
Lew Bergonzi ARPS
Graham Hodgkiss FRPS
Ray Spence ARPS

The Midland Dimension is a touring exhibition of prints. The exhibition was conceived with the idea of presenting the work of photographers in a more professional way and to show work to its best advantage. All the prints are mounted, glazed and framed in the same fashion to present a unity throughout the exhibition.



Retired Fighter Pilot

GP - Which would you say is your most favourite aspect of photography?

EH- A very difficult question to that, because when I am doing any of them that is the most important thing. I enjoy all of it really and I suppose going out with my own prints and being a light entertainer. Judging because I look at other people's work...

GP - .. Have you any particular mountains you want to climb in photography?

EH - I would like to continue putting as much back into my hobby as I take out and I think providing I can continue to that over the next I don't know how many year's I think that would be enough for Graham Hodgkiss really.

Graham continued exhibiting, lecturing and judging until June 2017.

"Graham always came to Blythe Bridge with a mountain of prints and the same enthusiasm, with advice on techniques and composition, he will be missed by all."

Blythe Bridge CC

'I first met Graham at A&EPS probably about 8 years ago. It was the first night I had attended any sort of camera club and I was very nervous, when Graham came over and greeted me. He gave me such a warm welcome and explained that he was presenting some of his images that night. I sat there amazed by the variety and quality of his work and wished I could get to that level. ...he gave me a lot of encouragement to learn my craft and above all take images that I like.

I wanted to thank him for all his encouragement and explain that was the reason I continued to come to club. As it happens that particular evening he had just won his favourite trophy at AEPS, but he said 'what you've just said is more important to me than this (putting down his trophy and giving me a hug)'. Over the years we had our differences but always remained friends. Graham kind of started my club photography journey, I've not always picked the best path to be on (I can imagine his comments to that), but because of him and his images at that first lecture I pursued the hobby and now have my BPE1 and my AFIAP."

Kylie-Ann Martin. AFIAP, BPE1



Maisie



The Look



Edward Henry Graham Hodgkiss